

Gratiot County Page

WILBUR NELSON

Hon. Wilbur Nelson, the new county treasurer, is one of the pioneers of Gratiot County, and occupies a responsible position in Ithaca as the president and manager of the Nelson Grain Co. He is the son of Francis Nelson, who settled in Lenawee County in 1835, moving to Arcadia in 1854, serving for several years as second judge of probate of this county.

County treasurer Nelson was born in Madison, Lenawee County, Mich., January 15, 1839, moving to Gratiot County at the age of fifteen. Obtained his education in the common schools and at the Gregory Business College at Kalamazoo. At the outbreak of the Civil War enlisted as a private in Company C, the 8th Infantry, a company composed almost entirely of the citizens of Gratiot County. Served as a sergeant, taking part in practically all of the important engagements and was twice wounded. After the battle of Fredericksburg promoted to second lieutenant of his company. He gave up his commission in January, 1864, returning home, and in March of the same year re-entered the



service as a captain of Co. I, 102nd U. S. Colored Infantry (1st Michigan Colored Infantry) organized at Detroit. The regiment served in Georgia, Florida and South Carolina.

At the close of the war in November, '65, returned to Ithaca and entered the mercantile business with Nathan Church, which he has carried on up to the present time very successfully; having several different partners, but since about 1898 has conducted the business alone.

Wilbur Nelson served as assistant assessor of internal revenues from '67 to '71. He served as president of Ithaca for one year, and has held many local offices of importance. Served as representative from Gratiot County to the state legislature in 1880.

With the unusually broad political and business experience the new treasurer has had there is not any doubt as to his ably filling his new office.

BIRD J. TUCKER

Bird J. Tucker, register of deeds, who has just commenced another term of office, has occupied the present position since 1913, and a resident of the county since 1874. Born in Lapeer in 1858, for some years lived at Sumner, where he was a merchandise



salesman, occupying a similar position at Riverdale for two years.

For about twenty years he was a resident of Alma, and while living here traveled for an outside concern. When he entered the office at Ithaca he established his home in that city.

J. W. HARROD

Joseph William Harrod, the present county surveyor, and for a great many years a resident of this county, was born in the county of Kent, England, in 1862, coming to Gratiot county in 1880, and in 1885 married Eva M. Shaw.

J. W. Harrod obtained his schooling in a suburban school near London, leaving school at the age of twelve. From then up to the present day he has been in business of various kinds. About four years spent in the grocery trade, and some time devoted to house decorating. He came to this country in 1880, making his home with a brother, who was engaged in surveying. The business appealed to him and has devoted practically all of his time from 1880 up to date to surveying.

Served for two years as a county drain commissioner, and for about eleven years has occupied the office of county surveyor, acting as surveyor and engineer for a large share of the work done in this county. Member of the Michigan Engineering Society, and held various positions while in the society.

NEWELL BRADFORD

Newell Bradford, the new sheriff of Gratiot County, was born in Wheeler township in 1872, and has spent practically all of his life in this county. He served as a highway commissioner for six years, and as the supervisor of Wheeler township for the past two years.

The number of votes cast in his district at the time of his election were



more than had been cast for any candidate who had ever run for office. The sheriff's occupation had been that of a farmer, and for some time he was a buyer for the Wheeler Elevator Company.

SIMPLE INAUGURATION

Pomp and Ceremony Abolished

STATE OFFICERS SWORN IN

Quietest January First Lansing Has Ever Witnessed

The quietest and simplest inaugural exercises ever held in the history of the state took place at Lansing Friday, January 1. All ceremony used in former inaugurations was dispensed with entirely, with the exception of the firing of a salute of seventeen guns, in charge of the First Michigan Field artillery.

The salute was fired at noon just as Chief Justice Flavius L. Brooke of the supreme court had finished the administration of the oath of office to Governor Ferris, who is now on his second term. Loren D. Dickinson, of Charlotte was then duly inaugurated as lieutenant governor. The new president of the senate formerly represented Eaton, Barry and Clinton districts in the senate for four years. The only remaining new officer to be sworn in was Coleman C. Vaughan of St. Johns, who is the new secretary of state. Secretary of State Vaughan is not a stranger at the capitol, having represented the same senatorial district as the lieutenant governor. Vaughan is one of the prominent Republicans of the state, serving as chairman of the Clinton county Republican committee for about 25 years.

The state officers who entered upon their second term are State Treasurer John W. Haarer of Ann Arbor and Attorney General Grant Fellows of Hudson. Auditor General O. B. Fuller, who has been in office for several years begins another term. Practically all of the deputies at the capitol are to remain.

The following appointments have been made by Governor Woodbridge N. Ferris and will be sent to the senate for confirmation at the beginning of the session:

Archibald Broomfield, Big Rapids, reappointed member of state board of accountancy, term expires Jan. 1, 1918.

Philip Eichhorn, Port Huron, reappointed member board of control of the School for the Blind at Lansing, term expires Dec. 31, 1920.

A. A. Sherman, Coldwater, member board of control of the state public school at Coldwater, term expires Dec. 31, 1920.

James W. Helme, Adrian, reappointed dairy and food commissioner. Term expires Dec. 31, 1916.

Orlando F. Barnes, Roscommon, reappointed member of state board of tax commissioners. Term expires on Jan. 6, 1921.

Cassius L. Glasgow, Nashville, reappointed railroad commissioner. Term expires Jan. 15, 1921.

John T. Winship, Saginaw, reappointed insurance commissioner. Term expires June 30, 1917.

James V. Cunningham, Detroit, reappointed commissioner of labor. Term expires June 30, 1917.

William P. Nisbitt, Big Rapids, reappointed private secretary to governor.

E. Clark Austin, Battle Creek, reappointed executive clerk.

John Bohent of Lansing, member of board of control of Industrial School for Boys. Term expires Dec. 31, 1920. Succeeds H. H. Larned.

ALL IS SERENE AT THE COURT HOUSE. THE NEWLY ELECTED ARE WELL STARTED IN THEIR OFFICES, UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE FORMER OFFICERS WHO ARE ACTING AS DEPUTIES. THE RE-ELECTED ONCE MORE HAVE COMMENCED ANOTHER TERM WITH THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THE VOTE THAT THEY RECEIVED THE FIRST TUESDAY IN NOVEMBER IS THE BEST REFERENCE POSSIBLE AS TO THEIR WORK OF THE PREVIOUS TERM.



The first court house was built in 1871-2, large frame structure which was in use for about thirty years. The subject of a new building was thoroughly discussed in 1899 and it was decided to build a larger structure of more substantial material. The estimated cost of the proposed building was

\$40,000.

The 24th of July, 1900 the ground was broken for the building and the work was completed in July, 1902, the dedication taking place on the 10th of that month. The new building costing about \$70,000.

J. L. POTTS

Jacob Leland Potts, Probate Judge of Gratiot County, was born in the village of Simcoe, County of Norfolk, Ontario, October 13, 1853. When about four years of age his father sold their farm in Canada, buying a much larger farm in Pavilion township, Kalamazoo County. Judge Potts remained on the farm until he was sixteen years of age, attending a small country school.

When seventeen years of age commenced working at various odd jobs. In 1871 he started work in the sawmill of A. W. Wright of Saginaw, devoting his spare time to study. After saving up some money he attended school, and as soon as this was exhausted commenced work again. His father died in 1873, and by this time he decided to study law. During the summer of 1873 attended a summer school, and in the fall obtained a third grade certificate, and taught at the Solon Center school at a salary of \$40 a month and board. The following year he attended the Northern Indiana Normal School enrolling in the Scientific course and receiving a diploma in June. Mr. Potts had borrowed money to attend school, and at the

completion of the course was without funds so he again taught school until the debt had been paid and secured enough money to buy a law library.



He next entered the law office of Jacob B. Rogers, at Plainfield, Mich., and by faithful application to his work

succeeded in passing the bar examinations in '77. Without any funds or clients it was impossible for him to start practice. In the summer of 1877 accepted a position at the House of Refuge, Plainfield, Indiana. While at Plainfield he met Miss Nellie E. Blodgett of Plymouth, New Hampshire, whom he married September 25, 1879.

Judge Potts again entered the law office of Jacob B. Rogers, moving in 1880 to Harrison, the county seat of Clare county, where he thought the opportunities were better, and remained there until the spring of 1886 when he moved to Ithaca, and since then has conducted a loan and real estate business in connection with his legal practice. He served the County of Gratiot as judge of probate from January 1, 1893, and in the fall of 1912 was again elected to the same office, which he now holds, the term expiring in 1919.

The office of the judge of probate is without doubt the best systematized office in the state. Since entering the office there have been but two nights when the day's work had not been entirely cleaned up, so that it would be possible for a new man to step in the following day and commence with a clean sheet.

COBURN-LAPAUGH

Ellis L. Coburn of Seville township and Laura F. Lapaugh of Sumner were married at the Methodist Episcopal church by Rev. Brownell Sunday afternoon.

HOWARD A. POTTER

Howard A. Potter, the county commissioner of schools, was born in 1878, in Eaton County, just about west of Grand Ledge. His parents removed to Gratiot County in 1880, and



has spent practically all of his life in the county since that date.

He graduated from the Ithaca High School in 1901, and from Alma College in 1906. After leaving Alma he spent two years teaching in the suburban schools, and was principal of the Carson City schools for one semester. Served on the Board of County Examiners from 1906 to 1907, and was an instructor at Alma College from January 1911 to June 1911, when he secured his present position as the county commissioner of schools.

BERNIE L. CASE

Bernie L. Case, the new County Clerk, was born in Lorraine County, Ohio, in 1872. Obtained his education at the Ohio schools, and at the age of fifteen years moved to Emerson, where he has lived up to the present time.

Occupied several political positions while there, serving as the township clerk for two years, 1899 to 1900, and



served as a supervisor for the town in the years of 1901-2 and 3, again serving in 1910-11-12-13, serving as chairman of the board in 1912.

Mr. Case has owned a farm in Emerson for many years, clearing the land himself. From 1891 to 1896 he sailed on the Great Lakes as a second mate for the firm of Moore and Barstow, who operated several merchandise steamers at that time. Politically he is a strong republican.

ERVA R. LAYCOCK

Erva R. Laycock, newly elected drain commissioner, was born in Fulton township August 6, 1873, and with the exception of two years has been a resident of the county from that time. He attended the Fulton schools and



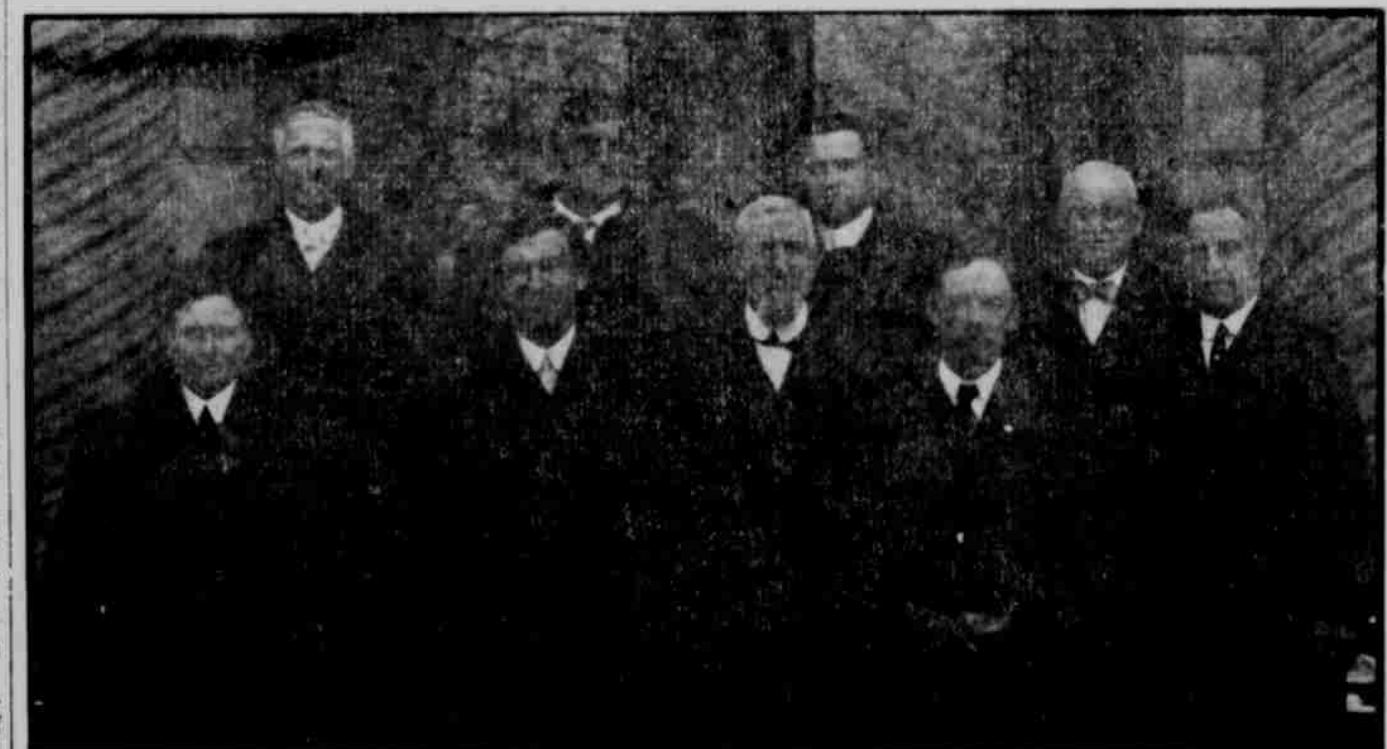
the Ferris Institute at Big Rapids for two years.

In 1897-98 in Otsego County, and in 1903 taught in the Washington township school. The occupation of the new drain commissioner has been that of a farmer and contractor for county drains. His long experience in the contract work for the county drains leaves no doubts as to his ability to successfully fill his new office.

PROMINENT BUSINESS MAN SERIOUSLY ILL

The many friends of C. A. Sawkins will be grieved to hear of his illness which for several days was thought to be very serious. At present he is at the Park house at St. Louis. It is hoped that he will be able to return to his work within a month. Mr. Sawkins has been in ill health for some time. He is one of the prominent business men of Alma, owning and managing the C. A. Sawkins Piano Company for many years.

GRATIOT COUNTY OFFICERS



Top row, left to right—Joseph Harrod, surveyor; Newell Bradford, sheriff; Ora L. Smith, prosecuting attorney; Bird J. Tucker, register of deeds.

Bottom row, left to right—Erva Laycock, drain commissioner; Howard Potter, school commissioner; Wilbur Nelson, treasurer; Bernie L. Case, clerk; J. Lee Potts, judge of probate.

DAVIS SCHOOL DISTRICT.

Mrs. H. Stadlberger spent the Xmas holidays with relatives in Canada.

Mrs. Semer Husted is in Detroit for a few days visiting her daughter, Mrs. J. Guernsey.

Mrs. Orlin Fletcher returned last Wednesday after a pleasant visit with her mother, at Battle Creek.

Mrs. Iris Felch is making a two

weeks' visit with friends in Grand Rapids and Newaygo.

Mr. and Mrs. A. Eicher of Alma, Mr. and Mrs. G. Saxton, Jr., of Bay City and Mr. and Mrs. G. Saxton of Sumner spent New Year's with R. C. Saxton and wife.

About 60 of the friends and neighbors gathered at the home of Archie McFaul January 2 in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Guy Hibner.

WARRANTS ISSUED FOR FERRET OWNERS

Deputy State Game Warden A. J. Murphy has taken out several warrants for parties using ferrets in Gratiot county. It seems that there are a great many in the county who have been using them. It is the intention of Game Warden Murphy to lessen the number in some degree.

ORA L. SMITH

Ora L. Smith, the newly elected county prosecutor, is a staunch republican and a lawyer of no little experience. He attended the Normal



school at Ypsilanti and the University of Michigan, and before entering the bar was engaged as a school teacher and principal.

SEVILLE CENTER.

After a week's vacation school at the Center was resumed January 4, with Miss Pauline Horton of Riverdale as teacher.

The French family gave a watch meeting and card party Thursday evening, Dec. 31. Mr. and Mrs. H. M. Miller received first favors and B. R. Hundey and Willard Miller the congratulations.

Mrs. George Abbot is entertaining her brother and sister, Leon and Myrtle Berkey of Grand Rapids.

Claude Whitford is entertaining his cousin, Mule Heintzelman of Grand Rapids.

Miss Tressie Fisher entertained Saturday evening in honor of Leon Grant, who is about to return to Texas to resume the management of his ranch.

Will Shong and family attended the Shong reunion New Year's day at the home of his brother, John, near Alma.

SUMNER ITEMS.

John Slater of Alma called on friends here Wednesday.

Mrs. Ella Hicks and daughter, Ina, visited William Hicks and family at Alma Tuesday.

Mr. Bartlett's two grandsons of Wheeler are spending a few days here. Louie Osterhout of Pennsylvania is visiting his brother, Rastus Osterhout. Merl Forquer of Riverdale spent a few days with his grandparents last week.

James Metcalf is entertaining his sister, whose home is in Canada. He has not seen her for thirty years.

Clifford Ayers of Detroit spent New Year's with his parents, Dr. Ayers and wife.

Bert Stewman and wife of Palo spent the week-end with his uncle, David and Charles Mulford.

Arthur Fowler lost a fine colt last week.

Orson Newman, south of town, made a business trip to St. Johns Monday.

Mrs. L. M. Forquer and Mrs. Wm. Bartlett attended watch meeting at Elm Hall Thursday evening.